

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: March 3, 2008

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES N.C. RANKS FIRST IN SMALL METRO BUSINESS GROWTH
Greensboro-High Point Named Top Small Metro Region; Two Rural Communities Also Take Top Spots

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley announced today that North Carolina placed first in the nation in *Site Selection* magazine's annual ranking of states with small metropolitan areas having the most new and expanded corporate facilities. The Greensboro-High Point area in Guilford County was named the No. 1 small metro region. Lexington-Thomasville in Davidson County and Statesville-Mooresville in Iredell County swept first- and second-place for rural areas.

"The latest *Site Selection* ranking proves that it is not just the large cities that benefit from North Carolina's investments in education, workforce development and the state's top-ranked business climate," Easley said. "As industries recognize they can find the 21st century training programs and qualified workers they need in all communities across the entire state, we gain jobs and effectively compete to lead in the global economy."

Greensboro-High Point topped the magazine list for the second consecutive year for areas with populations between 200,000 and 1 million, because of 30 new and expanded corporate facility projects recruited in 2007. Raleigh-Cary in Wake County was tied for sixth in the same category, with 25 projects. Rocky Mount in Nash County tied for sixth nationwide among metro areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000, for nine projects.

The central part of North Carolina swept the first- and second-place rankings for top rural areas, called "micropolitan" areas and defined by the magazine as those with a population between 10,000 and 50,000. The Lexington-Thomasville area received the top ranking, because of 30 new and expanded corporate facility projects recruited in 2007. Statesville-Mooresville earned second place, out of the nation's 674 rural areas, with 21 projects recruited.

"North Carolina's metropolitan and 'micropolitan' communities throughout the state are well represented in our rankings this year," said Mark Arend, editor in chief of *Site Selection*. "This tells me that North Carolina is successfully transitioning its economic base from one that was dependent on a couple of industries in the past to one that is attracting investment from a wide variety of industries today."

The magazine, calling the first- and second-place micropolitan wins "highly unusual," said those rankings speak to the broader region's attractiveness to expanding companies and the state's efforts to keep its business climate competitive.